



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian

Northern District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: RICHARD S.  
HARTUNIAN  
PHONE: (518) 431-0247  
FAX: (518) 431-0249

## PRESS RELEASE

ALBANY, NY – Richard S. Hartunian, United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York, John F. Pikus, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Albany Division and Steven Heider, Chief of the Town of Colonie Police Department, announced today that JOHN W. WINDLE, 44, of Philadelphia, PA was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary L. Sharpe to 70 months of imprisonment for his involvement in an identity theft ring.

On September 6, 2007, WINDLE pled guilty to four felony offenses: one count of identification document fraud, one count of wire fraud, and two counts of aggravated identity theft, in violation of 18 U.S.C. Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1028(a)(5), 1343, and 1028A, respectively. WINDLE was sentenced to 46 months for the identification document fraud and wire fraud and 24 months for the aggravated identity theft counts, three years of supervised release, forfeiture, and full restitution to the victims of his crimes.

According to court documents, WINDLE admitted that he was a team leader in a so-called “flip, bite, and write” identity theft scheme in which ring members targeted elderly women shopping in grocery stores. Teams led by WINDLE traveled to locations where retail stores, usually one that sold groceries, were located in close proximity to stores where electronics could

be purchased, such as Best Buy, Circuit City, or Sears. Typically, a member of WINDLE's team distracted the elderly female victim in the store ("the flip"), while WINDLE stole the woman's credit cards ("the bite"). WINDLE then went to his vehicle nearby and, using a laptop and ID printer, made a false identification document (ID) in the victim's name with a picture of one of the ring members traveling with him. The false identification documents WINDLE created included state driver's licenses and United States Armed Forces identification cards. Using the stolen credit cards and fake ID, WINDLE and his team members then purchased expensive electronics, miscellaneous merchandise, and gift cards, signing the victim's name to the credit card receipts ("the write"). WINDLE sold some of the electronics to KHURRAM FARID, who in turn sold them on the internet, while other proceeds were divided among the team members.

WINDLE admitted that he and ring member ANN M. GRICE carried out the identity theft scheme in the capital district region in July 2004, victimizing elderly women and businesses in Latham, Brunswick, Clifton Park, and Wilton, New York. WINDLE and GRICE were arrested by the New York State Police in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., after leaving this area and victimizing another elderly woman in a supermarket in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. WINDLE and GRICE were indicted by a federal grand jury in this District on February 16, 2007.\* GRICE remains at large.

On October 12, 2006, NELSON SLAUGHTER, another team leader in the identity theft ring, pled guilty before Judge Sharpe to felony offenses related to his participation in the "flip, bite, and write" scheme and was sentenced to 73 months imprisonment on May 7, 2008.

WINDLE and SLAUGHTER operated the scheme, which they developed with others, starting in at least 2001, and committed acts throughout the United States, including New York, California,

Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Additionally, on August 20, 2009, KHURRAM FARID was indicted by a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on charges of conspiracy and transportation of stolen property for receiving and reselling on the internet the stolen goods procured by WINDLE and SLAUGHTER.

The criminal investigation was conducted by the FBI, the Town of Colonie Police Department, the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the New York State Police, and was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Nicola J. Mrazek of the Fraud Section of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and Assistant United States Attorney Tina Sciocchetti of the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of New York.

Contact:	Trial Attorney Nicola J. Mrazek	(202) 514-8122
	AUSA Tina Sciocchetti	(518) 431-0247
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